



bulletin

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ARCE's Excavation of the Tomb of Djehuty (TT 110)

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In 2012 the American Research Center in Egypt, with the support of USAID, began a series of excavations in Theban Tomb 110. These excavations are one aspect of ARCE's initiative to open the tomb to visitors on behalf of the Ministry of State for Antiquities (MSA), and form part of ARCE's larger APS program of work in Luxor. The APS project is directed by John Shearman, with Andrew Bednarski as its archaeological field director, and Ruth Hatfield, Ali Henawy, Shimma Montaser, Yasser Mahmoud, and El Sayed Mamdouh working as project archaeologists within the tomb. Mohamed Abdel Bassat, assisted by Essam Nagy, worked as surveyors. This article explains the excavations to date.

TT 110 is found on Luxor's West Bank, on the border between Sheikh Abd el Qurna and El Khokha (Fig. 1). It was built for a man named Djehuty, who held the position of Royal Butler under both Hatshepsut (1473–1458 BC) and Tuthmosis III (1479–1425 BC). Its original entrance was through a forecourt to the north, which led into a transverse hall. This hall was decorated with carved and painted scenes, notably depictions of Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis III to either side of the entrance to the tomb's inner passage, an autobiographical stela, a stela



Fragment of a cartonnage mummy mask. Image by Abd-Allah Sabry and courtesy of ARCE.

to Amun-Ra-horakhty, and a false door. The passage from the transverse hall to the pillared hall was decorated with scenes of Djehuty's funeral procession, as well as those of offering-bringers and musicians. Unfortunately, the current degraded state of the tomb's pillared hall makes it impossible to say whether or not it was decorated in antiquity¹ (Fig. 2).

From at least the early twentieth century until today, the only way to enter TT 110 was through a break in an adjacent tomb, TT 42, as its forecourt was completely filled with debris. It was through this break that Norman Weigall first entered in 1909, followed by Norman de Garis Davies, who partially published its texts and wall scenes in 1932.² Davies' account of TT 110 notes that its pillared hall, unlike the rest of the tomb, was still filled with debris during his visit.

By the time ARCE began its archaeological work in late 2012, this debris had taken the

form of two large mounds, divided by a narrow walkway that led from the break into TT 42 through to TT 110's passage. These mounds were the result of manmade effort, and were held in place by two retaining walls on either side of the narrow walkway. In order to better access the tomb's passage and transverse hall from TT 42, and in order to facilitate the cleaning and conservation work planned for TT 110, it was first necessary to excavate the debris choking the pillared hall. This was done over the course of December 2012, under the supervision of contract archaeologist Ruth Hatfield, and with the assistance of ARCE archaeologist Ali Henawy (Fig. 3). Three hundred and forty-one objects were recovered from this excavation, with the mounds comprising fragments from the walls of TT 110 (Fig. 4), ceiling fragments, a large number of funerary objects, a plethora of human mummy remains (Fig. 5), modern paper,

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear ARCE Members,

ARCE's very important work at Luxor is featured on the cover and in the lead article of this issue of the Bulletin. ARCE's initiative to explore and open TT 110 to visitors on behalf of the Ministry of State for Antiquities is one of several conservation, training, and site improvement initiatives begun with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in its most recent Annual Program Statement (APS) award. This funding has proved vital to Luxor, which has been blighted economically by the sharp downturn in tourism since last summer's political events. Indeed, at one point this fall, hotel occupancy in Luxor was listed at only 2%—a disaster for a community that relies on tourism for its life's blood.

Thanks to the APS grant, ARCE has become, in the words of Associate Director for ARCE/Luxor John Shearman, "the biggest game in town," providing much needed employment for day laborers and skilled workers to conservators and archaeologists. At one point this summer, ARCE provided jobs for nearly 1,000 people in Luxor. And, ARCE's work has a "multiplier effect" in three important ways. First, John has made every effort to spread the jobs and the income from them to as many Luxor families as possible by only hiring one member of any given family. Second, these workers, in turn, provide income for local vendors who come to the worksite at break time to sell food, tea, and other refreshments to ARCE's workforce. And, third, ARCE makes every effort to purchase all the materials needed for the various projects that comprise the APS program locally. We are grateful to USAID for providing us with these funds

with which we can make so great an impact, not only on the sites where we are working—including the Mut Temple on the East Bank and Theban Tomb 110, Deir el Shelweit Temple, and Qurna on the West Bank—but also in the lives of the people of Luxor.

Contributions from our Research Supporting Members to this issue of the Bulletin include project reports on recent work by Kara Cooney on the ancient Egyptian reuse of coffins, and the presentation of an exhibition curated by Colleen Manassa at Yale entitled, "Echoes of Egypt." Additional contributions include a report by Joe Wegner on the Tomb of Senwosret III at Abydos, the announcement of the publication of a festschrift honoring Richard Wilkinson, a fellowship report on studies related to Egypt's Predynastic Period, and a graduate student study of images of anthropomorphized animals in ostraca and papyri.

We also mark the passing of three dear friends, author Barbara Mertz and long-time members and generous donors Nohad and Dirce Toulan with in memoriam reflections.

Finally, this issue includes ARCE's Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2011–2012, with all of its usual components. In conclusion, I hope that you will enjoy looking through this issue, which again shows the wide range of research interests that ARCE supports with your generous contributions. Thank you!

Gerry D. Scott, III
Director

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layers of ash, stones, and bricks. While some of the ancient material, such as the recovered wall fragments, clearly originated from TT 110, other material appears to have come from both the adjacent un-numbered tomb and possibly other tombs in the area. The abundance of small funerary objects recovered indicates that whoever pillaged and deposited the material in the mounds had no general interest in small objects.

With the pillared hall cleared, and conservation work proceeding inside TT 110, ARCE turned its attention to excavating the tomb's forecourt in February 2013. This excavation took the form of a Preparatory Archaeological Field School for local Luxor MSA inspectors.³ It marked the first time that ARCE has sponsored an archaeological field school completely organized, run, and taught by Egyptian archaeologists, in this case graduates of Ancient Egypt Research Associates' (AERA) training program, and with the language of instruction primarily in Arabic. The school was led by Yasser Mahmoud, with

instruction in excavation and recording offered by Essam Shehab, Essam Mahmoud, Mohamed Hatem, Husien Rekaby, Shima Montaser, and Mohamed el Khateeb. Specialist training in ceramics, osteology, and illustration, were given by Mohamed Naguib, Afaf Wahab, with assistance from Warda el Nagar, and Yasser Mahmoud, with assistance from El Sayed Mamdouh. Survey work for the school was done by Mohamed Abdel Basset, assisted by Essam Nagy.

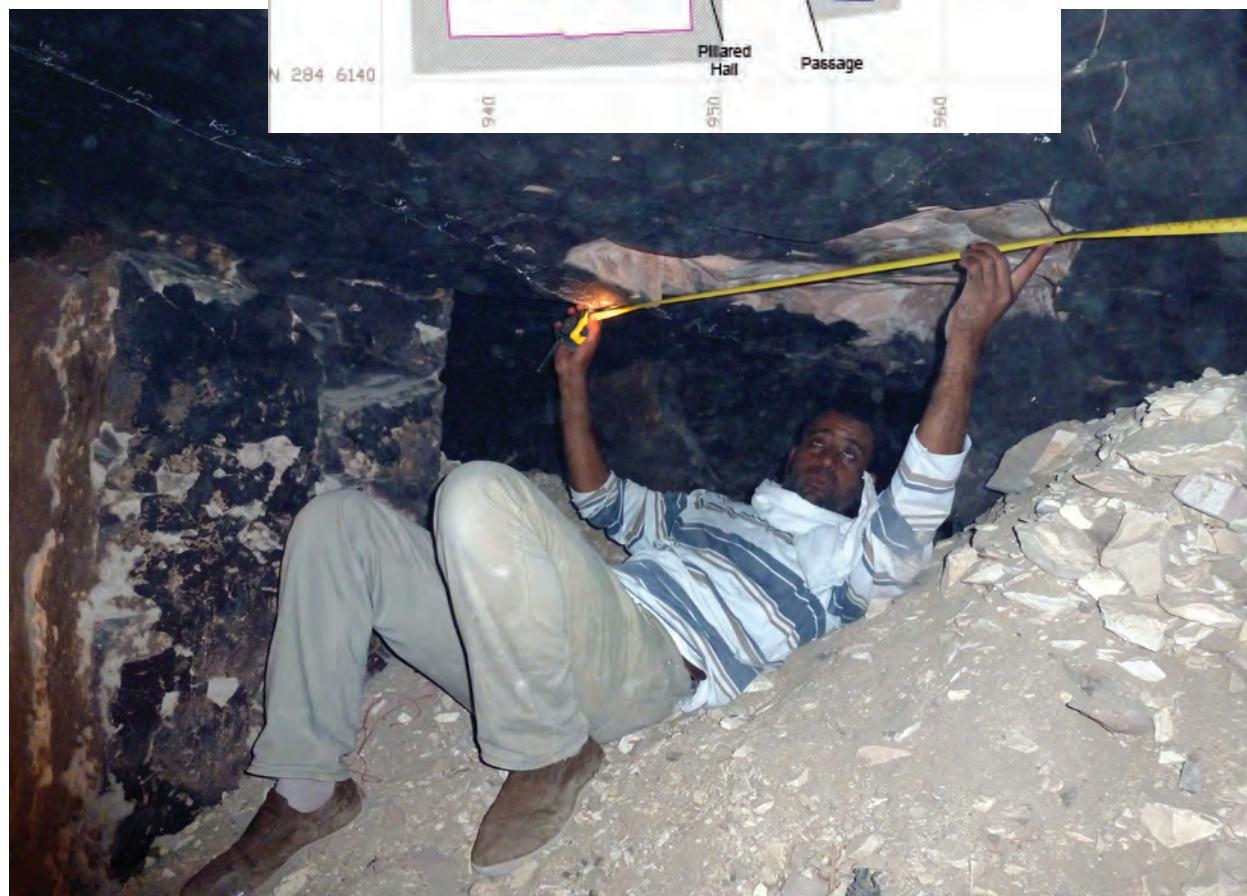
Two sessions of instruction were offered between February and June 2013, with 35 inspectors receiving training. The primary focus of the field school was on instruction, rather than excavation, which meant that the pace of work moved slower than that of a regular excavation. Four 10 meter by 10 meter squares were opened immediately above the location of the forecourt, with an additional three 10 meter squares opened to the north east of the excavation area. These additional squares were dug for safety reasons, to form both a ramp leading down

Fig. 1: A view from atop TT 110 prior to excavations, with the staircase leading to TT 42 to the right, looking out towards the cultivation. Image by Owen Murray and courtesy of ARCE.

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Fig. 2: A plan of the upper portion of TT 110, showing its relationship to TT 42, and an un-numbered tomb. Image by Mohamed Abdel Basset and courtesy of ARCE.

Fig. 3: With the floor of the pillared hall almost completely blocked with debris, ARCE archaeologist Ali Henawy uses the available space to draw a chalk baseline from which to measure on the room's ceiling. Image by Ruth Hafield and courtesy of ARCE



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Fig. 4: The 'bee' and 'sedge' hieroglyphs, which form part of a king's royal title. Image by Abd-Allah Sabry and courtesy of ARCE.



Fig. 5: A mummified human torso, and a good example of the large number of human remains found in the pillared hall. Image by Abd-Allah Sabry and courtesy of ARCE.

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Fig. 6: A view north, from the partially excavated forecourt of TT 110 to the intended ramp. Image by Yasser Mahmoud and courtesy of ARCE.

into the excavation area, and for use by visitors once the excavations are complete (Fig. 6). The field school's work brought the excavation to an approximate depth of four meters. The majority of the removed material proved to be modern, with the upper strata containing the remains of earlier habitation; something we expected given the close proximity of Qurnawi houses to the excavation site. The majority of the underlying material, however, took the form of discarded objects from the local population, and spoil from nearby modern excavations. While four meters of debris, rubbish, and spoil may not sound exciting, the material yielded over 500 objects of interest, including funerary cones, coffin fragments (Fig. 7), portions of funerary furniture, and even an ostracon (Fig. 8). By the end of the field school, another two to three meters of material needed to be removed before reaching the floor of the ancient forecourt. The excavation of the forecourt resumed in November 2013.

Over the summer of 2013, with no conservation work being conducted inside TT 110, ARCE archaeologists Shimaa Montaser, Yasser Mahmoud, and El Sayed Mamdouh began to excavate the monument's shafts. Two shafts had been identified inside the tomb prior to this work:⁴ one immediately under the transverse hall's false door; and one between the pillars of the pillared hall. Surprisingly, the shaft under the tomb's false door was never completed. The second shaft, located between the pillared hall's pillars, was partially obscured by one of the mounds of debris removed by Hatfield and Henawy. This suggests that whoever built the mounds within the pillared hall had no interest in keeping the shaft clear for later access.

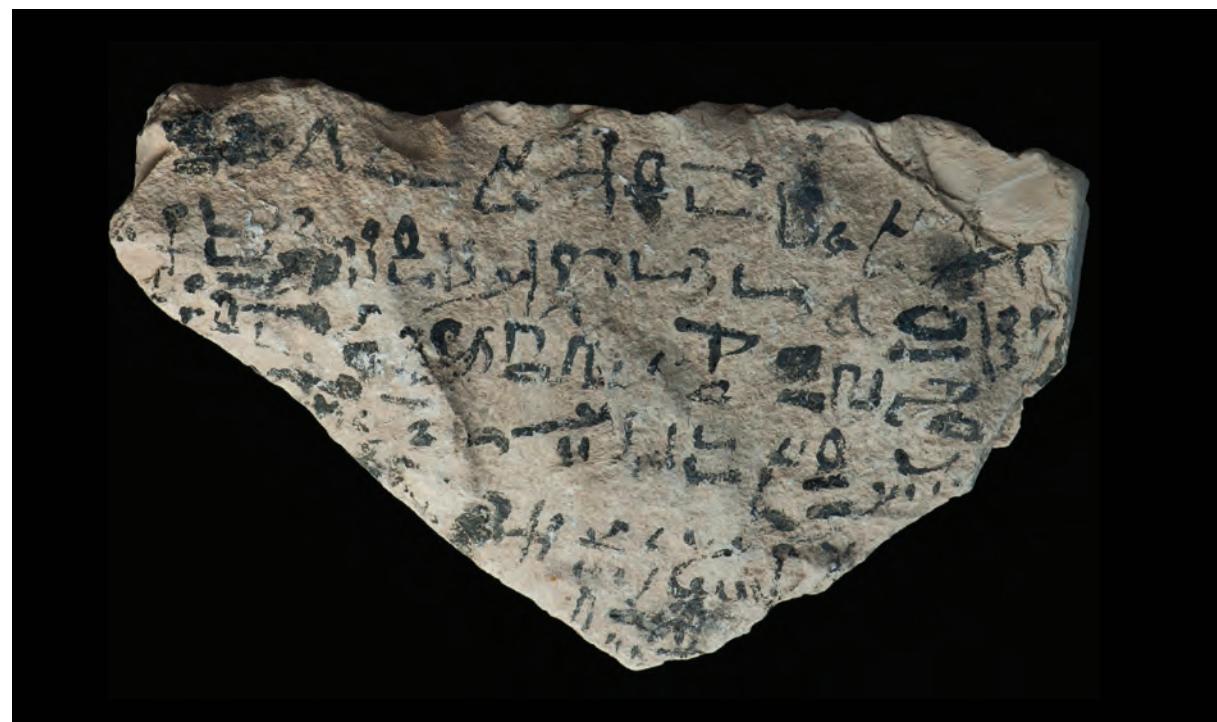
Before descending to a depth of 5.85 meters, TT 110's burial shaft connected to a side chamber that appears to more properly belong to TT 42 (Fig. 9). As ARCE's remit is for the excavation

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Fig. 7: A coffin fragment; one of many pieces of broken funerary items discarded and dumped into TT 110's forecourt. Image by Abd-Allah Sabry and courtesy of ARCE

Fig. 8: An ostracon from ARCE's Preparatory Field School excavation of TT 110's forecourt. Image by Abd-Allah Sabry and courtesy of ARCE.



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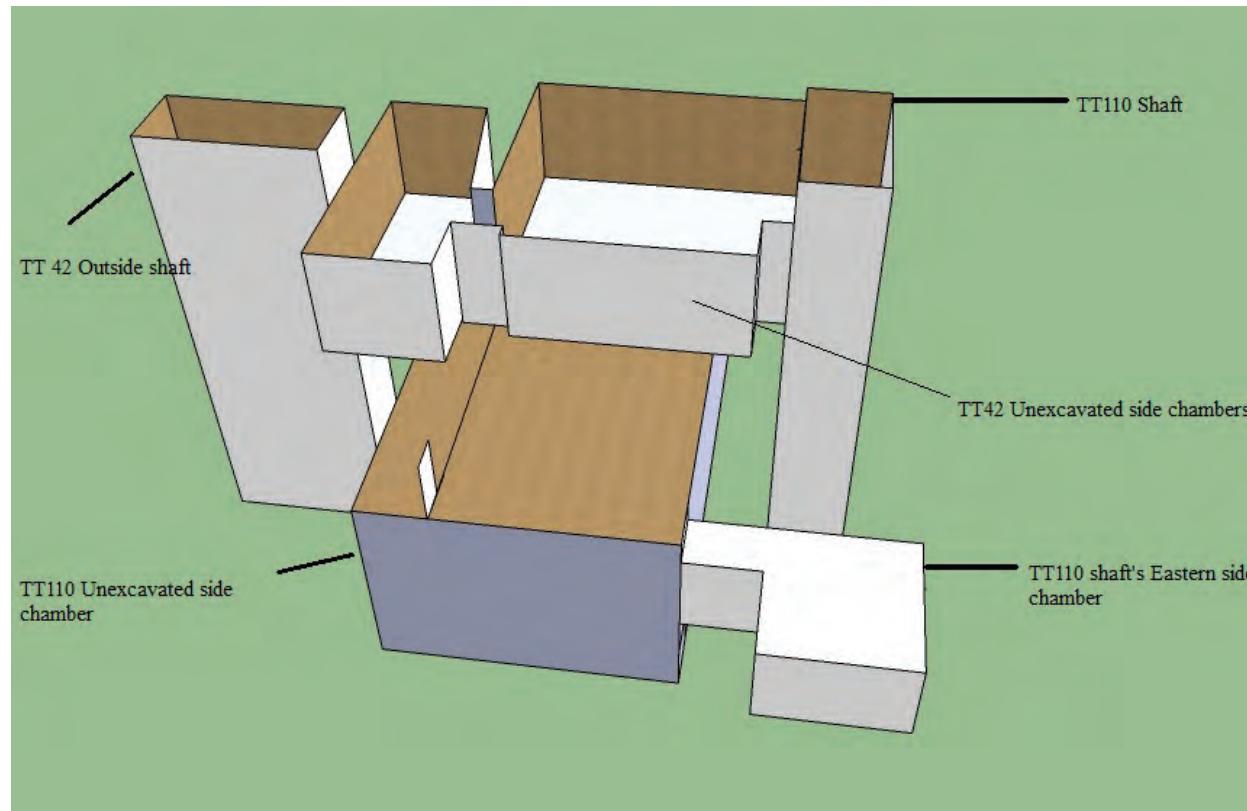


Fig. 9: A digital sketch of TT 110's burial shaft (not to scale), as it relates to rooms directly and indirectly connected to it. Image by Hasan Ramadan and courtesy of ARCE.

of TT 110, not TT 42, this room was left unexcavated. At the bottom of TT 110's burial shaft, two other chambers were found, in addition to what appears to be access to a burial shaft that leads to the forecourt of TT 42. During the time permitted before the start of the new conservation season within the tomb, the smaller of these two lower rooms was cleared. The larger one, however, was left unexcavated. At the time of writing, ARCE has applied for permission to continue its excavations of the lower portions of TT 110 via the shaft outside of TT 42. By accessing the bottom chambers thusly, ARCE will be able to conduct its excavations without fear of disrupting the on-going conservation work within TT 110's decorated upper rooms. The work over the summer of 2013 revealed 394 objects from TT 110's shaft and connected chambers. As with the tomb's pillared hall, the

lower chambers revealed large numbers of human remains (Fig. 10), and material related to human burials, such as cartonnage (front cover). It is expected that the continued excavation of the lower chambers will continue to reveal similar material.

ARCE's archaeological investigation into TT 110 has thus far provided a tantalizing glimpse into the tomb's use and history. With excavations planned for the near future, and with so much material in need of analysis, much work remains to be done. This archaeological work, coupled with ARCE's conservation efforts in the tomb, and plans to open the monument to visitation, promise to provide a comprehensive understanding of Djehuty and his intended resting place.

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Fig. 10: A workman offers a human scale for a mummy found during the excavation of TT 110's lower chambers. Image by El Sayed Mamdouh and courtesy of ARCE.

Notes

- 1 Bertha Porter and Rosalind L. B. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings. I. The Theban Necropolis. 1. Private Tombs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), p. 227-229.
- 2 See N. de G. Davies, "Tehuti: owner of tomb 110 at Thebes," in R. Mond, *Studies Presented to F. L. Griffith* (London: EES, 1932), p. 279-282.
- 3 For more information on the field school, see: arce.org/conservation/fieldschool/TT110
- 4 These shafts are represented on Fig. 2 as rectangles with 'x's inside of them.

